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VIA CRUCIS

OR

DEATH AND LIFE.

A POEM

BY

A. MACCORMAC.

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ADELAIDE :
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1906.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HALLAM LORD TENNYSON
THIS POEM IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

1482331

FARRINGFORD,

FRESHWATER, I.W.

November 5, 1905.

Dear Mr. MacCoranac.

I shall be honoured by your dedication of your poem to me. Many thanks for sending it to me, and particularly those lines on G. F. Watts' "Love and Death."

Yours truly,

TENNYSON.

If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, poet ! in thy place, and be content.

— *Wordsworth.*

True fiction hath in it a higher end
Than fact ; it is the possible compared
With what is merely positive ; and gives
To theceptive soul an inner world,
A higher, ampler Heaven than that wherein
The nations sun themselves.

— *Festus.*

VIA CRUCIS,

OR DEATH AND LIFE.

A tender sadness stole across my life,
And yielding to its impulse, nothing loth,
My listless footsteps brought me on the way---
From what is dear to every heart, our home---
To God's own acre, not a great remove.
My gentle wife, whose soul was linked to mine,
Lies there in hope, so calmly with the rest ;
(What time "God's finger touched her, and she
slept")
Waiting with them, the great Archangel's call.

Perhaps this was the latent spring impelled
The wheels of life, and softly bade them move.
The day was quite in keeping with my mood,
Not over dull, but restful and benign,
Like peaceful interlude in birdie's song,
When he tones down those trilling high-pitched
notes

Of his ; or if the weary, throbbing heart
Of this great world had paused to take a breath.

"Tread gently," said my soul, "'tis hallowed
ground,"

Not sanctified by merely formal rites,
Perfunctory, but by the sleeping saints
Whose sacred dust salted the cursed earth
And made it sweet once more, and hence " God's
Acre."

So in this sober, rev'rent frame of mind—
The more by far akin with heaven than earth—
I sauntered slowly, restful, unperturbed.

A deeply solemn awe crept o'er my heart
Lest one, one only, blind'ring footfall harsh,
Might wake from sleep profound the holy dead,
And bring them back to this dull Earth once more ;
So my steps moved in quiet fearsomeness.
Not wing of bird nor any human sound
Disturbed the peace of those now sleeping there,
Nor mine, and thus I calmly sauntered on.

When like in weird kaleidoscopic dream
The scene had changed, the vision was trans-
formed.

Before me stood a lithe but comely form,
A youthful figure, tall and statuesque,
So motionless and calm. She stood the while
In solemn silence o'er a new-made grave
(Belike our mother Eve, we might conceive,
Bent o'er her murdered boy, in deep amaze,
And wond'ring what death meant). She never
moved,
But stood in sad expectancy to see
The grave again ope wide its cruel jaws,
Like Jonah's whale, and Earth give back to Earth,
Light of her eyes, life of her life, her all.

Her sombre garb looked stark against the yew
That grew near by, and grated on the eye,
Discordantly, like rasping note so harsh
Resounding loud upon a tortured string.
I held my breath and stilled my beating heart,
Which moved in kindly sympathy with hers,
Instinct with caution, and a mindful fear,
Lest my rude presence there, at such a time,
Might wake her from her mournful reverie,
And call her spirit back from him she loved.
A telepathic message may be sent
From mind to mind, from heart to heart, unseen,
Unheard, and so strange presence mean offence ;
Of this, howe'er, she gave not slightest sign,
But stood in mute indifference to all
But him, whose form the red Adamic clay
Enswathed ; and thus she still stood there
unmoved,
Like some dark bronzéd angel, made to stay,
And firmly grafted on to solid Earth.

Such grief is sacred, it's divine, like His.
His own, " The Man of Sorrows and with grief
Acquaint," and who, Himself, just as this fair
Anonyma, stood o'er that brother's grave
In Bethany, and rivers of salt tears
Ran down His furrowed cheeks to troubled Earth,
Those sisters dear mingled their tears with His,
And one o'ermast'ring sorrow swept all hearts ;
Yea, that great heart of Christ was melted too,
For it was sweetly human, like our own.

The scene again is changed, and wheel revolves
All freely on its axis, like the Earth,

Presenting other aspect to our eyes ;
The part that was so lately sunk in Earth
Comes up again ; we see it for a while,
And then it disappears once more from view,
Repeating the same process endlessly,
Thus change seems quite necessitate to us,
Is written large, in letters visible,
On earth and sky, on sea and land the same,
On man and all he is, and all he has ;
Nothing seems constant but inconstancy !
The axis only sure on which all turns,
And that great axis firm, the unchanging God.
Darkness gives place to light, the night to day ;
The evening shadows to the morning's dawn,
Decay and death to resurrection life,
The sin-cursed Earth to God's most holy Heaven,
True manly natures to Deific state,
And short-lived time to long eternity,
All ill of earth to the all good above ;
And in all meaner things the same stands true,
As tears to bright, sweet sunshine of a smile ;
E'en leaves turn their soft lining to the wind.
With magic wand we waive the darkness back,
And in the person of a little child,
Bid light, life, beauty, joy once more appear,
And bathe our spirits in their radiant beams.

Beside that stricken mother stood a child,
Of four years old, or so, in snowy white ;
Like gleam of light against a murky sky.
She clung quite close with both her little hands
To mother's dress (was not that mother all
That she had left ?), but turned her sunny face

Quite round, and to the Empyrean high,
Her soft blue eyes were raised in wonderment ;
A gentle smile played round her dimpled cheek,
As if to God's great world death never came,
And that dread word had ne'er been heard on
Earth.

Like Wordsworth's child, " Her beauty made me
glad ;"

Methinks she smiled on me, and I was pleased
That this dark world had got some sunshine still ;
And Christ had taught, when here, " Their angel's
eyes

Always look up into the face of God."

O, for a poet's pen, great Dante's own,
Or Puritanic Milton's kindly hand,
To fill the outline of this tragic scene ;
So simple, so pathetic, yet profound.

My blund'ring hand's unequal to the task,
My trembling fingers cannot strike the lyre ;
The will is present, not the power to do.

One sings, " Things seen are mightier than things
heard."

This woman's love has had its counterparts
No doubt, full oft in striking brilliant form,
Thrown up on the dark background of the world,
For death is busy, and great love lives on ;
And this is not a picture conjured up
To please the humour of a prying age.

Mine eyes alone, and God's, beheld the scene,
And still it haunts me, as I've pictured it ;
While Mem'ry holds her seat upon her throne
Its sculptured lines can never be effaced.

Great mystic pictures stand before our eyes,
If we had only sense to see them there,
And earthly things are figures of the true.
Just hold this picture up ; now catch the light
Upon it, there, and let it tell its tale :
That draped dark figure bending low is Death,
And her black wings have swept around the world,
Cast her dark shadow, and eclipsed the sun,
Throwing a gloom o'er all our happy homes.
The curse has fallen on the Earth's fair face.
Briers and thorns spring up on every hand,
Sad witness of the fact, man broke God's law ;
That law was holy, righteous, just, and good,
That breach meant death ; and death has surely
come ;
And sin and death they tramp across the world,
Twin brothers in their misery and woe ;
As the first pair left Paradise, disgraced,
Hanging their heads in shame, and hand in hand,
Mindful alone of what they lately lost ;
How much to them and us, ah, who can tell !
What depths of woe profound are in that word.
It reeks of Hell, the prison of the damned ;
I'll draw a veil across and hide it up
From mortal ken ; but still the echo, lost !
There is a first, but, oh ! that second, death,
More awful than the first, and blacker still,
An echo more profound, heart-breaking, lost !

But now I tune my lyre to major key,
And sing of life, Eternal Life from God.
From Adam, death ; through second Adam, life ;
The Christ of God, the all-abounding life,

For this He came, that men might live, not die,
And having life, might have it more and more.
All life's from God, the fountain source and spring,
But death from man, and a polluted stream.
Our God is great, and God is good, and strong,
And life must conquer death, for death is doomed,
And shall at last lie dead at feet of life.

That poor lorn mother standing there, so mute,
So stricken dumb with grief, so helplessly
Depressed, bent down with weight of woe ;
With tear-drowned eyes, trying in vain to look
Down through the earth, and that sealed coffin lid,
To see once more the form of him she loved,
Like many more, could grasp but half the truth.
She saw of picture dark, but blacker side,
Her eyes were only fixed on Earth (on Heaven
Her child's, and so on light, and love, and God).
Could she have stood beside that other grave
She would have heard the Saviour's mighty words,
" I am the resurrection and the life,
He that believes on Me shall never die ;"
Had she but raised her eyes to worlds above,
And seen the great Redeemer there, Who died,
And dying, gained the mast'ry over death,
But rose again to reap the victor's spoils,
(The first bright star of Resurrection Morn,
To shine for ever in a cloudless sky),
She might have said, with Job, " I know that my
Redeemer liveth, and shall stand in latter day
On Earth, and in my flesh I shall see God."
God's not the God of death, but Life of life,
And mighty life has power to transmute

The basest dregs to Heaven-born life again,
On God's own coinage all so battered and
Defaced, God's image can be stamped once more,
And passing through the crucible of death,
Shine out more brightly than it did at first.

Some philosophic people blandly say
This body can't be raised to life again.
At death it's passed to utter nothingness.
We're warned against philosophy so called,
We ask, Can Christian people " die like dogs,"
Be buried " with the burial of an ass ?"
Ye fools ! The seed cannot spring up again,
Except it die, for out of death comes life,
Each seed its own, and not another life ;
From out the very seed that died, the life,
And nowhere else. God's method, and it's true.
A natural body sown, a spirit body raised.
" God gives it body as it pleaseth Him,"
It's sown, it's raised. The " it's " the same in both,
The " it's " in one's the " it " in other too.
And so, from out the very dust of death,
As at the first, there springs the second life,
More glorious than the first, and like to God.
No death of Christ, no Resurrection Life ;
And if no Life in Christ, no life at all,
And we must still remain dead in our sins.

We're told " the whole creation groans in pain,
And travails sore " impatiently the while,
Biding the time, God's own, when death perforce,
Must give back what is not his own, but God's.
For which the ransom price has been paid down,

The body's full redemption, and the curse
Be lifted off the face of God's fair world.
The martyred saints keep crying out, " O Lord,
How long ?" Thy chariot's slow in coming, oh,
How long ! Why tarry its great golden wheels ?
The living church, within the dead, cries out
" O Lord ! How long ?" and often as they meet
In solemn silence, to partake the bread
And wine of mystic feast, they read, or hear,
The oft repeated words, " Until He come."
The wave sheaf fair, first fruits of harvest home,
Has been already reaped, and waved before
The Lord in highest Heaven ; but the full corn
Has not yet come to ear, and harvest waits.

Others there are who seem to have contempt
For this poor house of clay. As their great souls
Are large, and the mud-hovel's all too small
To lodge such mighty minds, they feel so cramped,
" Cribbed, cabined, and confined ;" no room have
they

To preen their mighty wings for aerial flight,
And so they care not what befall at last ;
In what tempestuous ruin it be hurled,
Cremated, drowned at sea, and food for fish.

The Indian hunter loves his wigwam home,
And the rude shieling's dear to highland heart ;
The black man's mia-mia's not beneath his care.
As Hebrew poet said of man, himself,
" I'm fearfully and wonderfully made,
And that my soul it knoweth very well."
He is the better judge, I bow to Him :

The parts, though complex, are compact, adjust,
 A trinity of parts subservient :
 The body cannot say to soul, " No need
 Of thee ;" nor soul to spirit " I've no need
 Of thee ;" they altogether make the man ;
 Each part a complement of other two :
 The spirit must return to God again,
 And kindred Earth must claim the body, dead ;
 But, phoenix-like, 'twill rise from dust once more,
 A new, more glorious body, all divine,
 " A house not made with hands," eternal, God's,
 All worthy of the great Creator's skill.
 If God incarnate dwelt in man's clay house,
 And man be temple of the Holy Ghost,
 Take heed. O man ! lest thou by word or deed
 Defile the temple of the holy God !
 If any do, " that man will God destroy."
 Speak, then, not lightly of your house of clay,
 And while you call it yours, bethink it God's.

The greatest Scottish poet built himself
 A " wee bit house," a lowly " but and ben."
 That poor clay hut is standing yet, intact,
 In good and wholesome preservation kept,
 And visited by strangers, far and near,
 And why ? Because a mighty master mind
 Once lived beneath its roof, and gave his songs,
 So lively and so true, to the four winds,
 And they are ringing still around the world.
 Shall this poor hut be thought of more account
 Than your great house, the dwelling place of God,
 Who often sings, within your soul and mine,
 The stirring songs of our great fatherland,

The “Songs of Faith and Hope,” and Love and Heaven ?

The good Charles Wesley wrote some noble hymns, Loved minstrel that he was. They touch the heart And move the soul as well as please the ear.

The chief in my esteem, above the rest, Is “Jesus, Lover of My Soul, O let Me to Thy Bosom Fly.” But there is one Which grates upon our feelings dubiously, “Ah Lovely Appearance of Death !” O, no !

Whoever saw or felt, that such was death. Ask that poor mother there, beside her child, Is death like what the poet painted it ?

A blank, blank look, and mournful shake of head, And one great sigh, heaved up from broken heart, Would be, methinks, the only mute reply.

E'en that queer hymn has got its brighter side. There are some cases where the grim, grim look Of death has never cast a cloud upon The sleeper's face ; a heavenly calm, sweet peace, And holy restfulness are all you feel, When standing ling'ring o'er the form you loved. I know, and feel it now, when my own life Had suffered an eclipse, when darkness reigned Supreme, and all was like an ugly dream. The morning after cruel death had come, Quite unexpected, and so suddenly, I crept in where a gentle sleeper lay, And drawing back the thin transparent veil That screened the face of her I loved so well, I thought, fair as that face had been to me,

I never saw it half so sweet before ;
It seemed as if an angel had come down,
So noiselessly, in quiet dead of night,
Stood over her, and warm soft after-glow
Of Heaven's sunlight lingered round her face.
Like his, that proto martyr true, whose name
Appears on blotted page of sacred Writ,
Of whom 'tis said, the face " did shine like that
Of angel fair " before all others' eyes).
Or she, herself, had gone to Paradise,
And met bright spirit on the shining way,
Charged with a holy message from on high --
God's embassage of love to stricken souls—
And these had changed their place. The one from
heaven
Had felt a little tired -- the way was long—
And folding up those fair, bright wings of hers,
Rested awhile, before returning home,
To that great Heaven of God, from whence she
came ;
And that sweet angel face was what I saw.
I thanked the God of love, who'd kindly given
This vision fair, to soothe my aching heart.

There are so many voices in the world,
And none without their deep significance,
But each and all speak language of their own,
As early Christians did at Pentecost.
The poets paint with words, the painters speak
With brush or pencil, as they choose,
Each after his own order, free as air.
It's said the age of miracles has passed ;
But the prophetic office has not closed,

And prophecy's more true than history :
Would that the Lord's own people all spake out
And prophesied as spirit gave them words.
Of old God made His prophets poets too,
And beat upon their spirits like a drum.
Enoch and Job, Isaiah, Habbakuk,
Moses and Jeremy, Elijah, all
The rest, those great God-fearing men of old.
The fire of God burned in their flaming souls,
And gave their spirits wing to soar so high.
Their words are ringing still in human ears,
And thunderstrike Earth's brazen walls e'en now
With awful clang and clash. "Thus saith the
Lord ;"
And as I hear those stinging words, "Thou art
The man," I see brave Nathan's hand stretched
out,
And that forefinger, true as gleaming steel,
Point with unerring aim at David's heart,
And bring the King, in dust, at feet of God.

The priestly office is mechanical.
The church can make official heads
To offer sacrifice, preside at feasts.
The prophet of the Lord is born, not made,
And, being God-born, he can never die,
But lives for ever in his deathless words,
And like Christ's own, can never pass away.
The prophet is divine necessity,
God's mouth and trumpet to deflecting age
(God's witnesses to all concurrent time).
The world is false, bedizzened, and bedecked
With shams, so gay and meretricious ;

God's truth stands naked, shiv'ring in the cold,
In freezing presence of this haughty dame.
God clothes Truth's brow with thunder, and adorns
Her with His beauty and His steadfastness ;
Arms her with whips, like scorpion stings,
To lash the world for follies and her crimes ;
But oftner far God sends great Truth with love
And mercy, clothed all with the sun and crowned
With seven stars and mellow radiance of
The moon, all quiv'ring round her peaceful feet,
To woo and win the wanton faithless world
To kiss the lowly footstool of His throne ;
And so we have the great Evangel writ
In diff'rent languages, all spelling love.
But why and wherefore this digression? Why?
I stay my wing in its erratic flight,
And bow my spirit rev'rently before
The great, the famous poet-painter Watts,
Who speaks in trumpet notes so rich and clear,
In that profound creation, " Love and Death,"
And who—great artist that he ever was—
Dipping his pencil in deep sombre hues,
Has painted such a picture, large and grand,
Which, like a noble river, streams along,
Making undying music in its course
(But still with muffled cadence as Dead March),
Dirge-like and solemn, through this vale of tears,
With weeping willows bending o'er the brim.

But death is not the gaunt and horrid thing
One sees in medieval art, a grim
And ghastly skeleton of naked bones,
And grinning skull, with hollow caves that once

Were eyes, which may have flashed like artist's own,
And mighty wings, with sharpened scythe, to mow
The standing corn of human life in one
Fell sweep ; but a majestic figure, draped
In ample folds of sober grey, and arm
Outstretched towards a mansion's lordly hall,
With one foot on the step to enter in,
But brave, small figure, firmly set and strong
(A Cupid not unlike what may be seen
Sometimes in good pictorial art, the wings
Resplendent with bright hues) fights valiantly
To bar Death's entrance to the loving home ;
And who, with look of deep and sad concern,
And muscles strained and tense with effort strong,
And ruffled wing, so eloquent of strife,
Pushes with might and main to keep great Death
At bay. Ah ! Futile seems th' adventurous task,
This fact is palpable, Death's lost his wings,
Can't fly, can't soar, is " Earthy of the Earth,"
Whilst love possesses large, far-reaching wings
To soar aloft to Empyrean high
And gain at last th' Eternal home of God.
What means that bright red spot, so clear, upon
The wing of Love ? Does that strong tint mean
Life ?
" The blood's the Life " which sprinkled on door
post
Of Israel's homes of old, to them, meant life.
Whilst all outside, in Egypt's homesteads, death,
Like scarlet fillet round the scapegoat's neck.
'Tis said that Ruskin saw in Turner's art
More than the artist saw in it himself.

Perhaps we push the symbol all too far,
 But still, "the blood it speaks." It speaks of love,
 It speaks of death. It speaks of life through Christ
 (For "blood is language at its highest power")
 The Eternal Life of God to man, through him
 Like cloven passage in the deep Red Sea,
 For God's own children to the promised land).
 For love at first conceived the simple plan,
 How, through the streaming veins of Christ, "our
 Hope,"

Might flow the Eternal Life of God to man,
 Who's "dead in trespasses and sins," but who
 Shall rise at last, on wings of faith and love,
 To Paradise, beyond what Earth has seen,
 Of poet in his flight has ever dreamed.

Where grows, once more, the ample Tree of Life,
 "Which bears twelve fruitages, one every month,
 The leaves of which shall heal the nations' wounds,"
 When death shall cease, for ever be destroyed,
 And reign of life set in which never ends.

Dear little child, I turn once more to you ;
 Your sweetness won my heart ; you're not the first
 Hast taught God's own great lessons to the world.
 He "brings the wisdom of the wise to naught,"
 And "out of mouth of babes He perfects praise."
 Christ's object lesson was a little child.
 I wonder not that men of olden times
 Worshipped the Sun, and that clear symbol has
 Come down to us, and's found where least you'd
 guess.

I'd rather wear a girdle of white cord,
 Become Parsee, worship the Sun, the source

Of light, and heat, and life, and joyousness,
Than be in Christian land a blatant fool,
And "saying in my heart there is no God."
If "undevout astronomer is mad,"
How madder still agnostic scientist?
That child has taught that life and light and joy
Have come right down from Heaven with us to
stay;
But if, like owls, we shut our eyes to light,
To Heaven, and God, and hooting at the Sun,
Cry out "where is it?" and abide in night,
When light is all around. The sin is ours,
Whilst "wage of sin is death, the gift is life,"
"The last great foe to be destroyed is death,"
And then Eternal Life for evermore.
We sing "Ring out the old. Ring in the new,"
Again, "Ring out the grief that saps the mind."
Once more, "Ring out the darkness of the land."
'Bove all, "Ring in the Christ that is to be,
The Son of God, the Lite, the Light of men."

PART II.

My story's told, and what it signified,
A parable—put forth in modern dress
Like the Great Teacher's own. 'Twas thus He
spake,
And common people gladly heard His words,
And I'd be pleased if they, too, heard my voice ;
But—O how short of His simplicity,
Divine, and wondrous " art of putting things ! "
The Rose of Sharon's shed a sweet perfume,
Floating along the clear far Eastern sky,
And we in this great Southern land have caught
Its fragrance, wafted onward round the world.
But e'en a lowly, wild Australian shrub
May have some fragrance too, if those who dwell
Beneath the Southern Cross be sensitive
Enough to catch its sweetness. As a bee
By Heaven-taught instinct sure, quick speeds its
way,
And hast'ning on inerrant wing, soon finds
The honeyed nectar in the humble cell.
But now I drop my metaphor, come down
To plain prosaic verse. When I reached home
That day what I had seen affected me,
And feeling weary, flung me down to rest.
My senses soon were steeped in idle sleep,
And then I dreamt a dream I now relate.

I thought a mighty angel fair, swooped down,
Stood over me ; and then with cunning hold
Bore me aloft, on outstretched pinions wide,
At lightning speed. We clave the azure sky ;
Swept through vast realms of space, 'mid cloudy
forms

Most weird and wonderful ; and dismal shades,
So icy cold and dense, which made me feel
As if our headlong flight, adventurous,
Was hurrying to regions of the damned.

When all at once, emerging swiftly out
Of dismal night, so pitchy dark and wild,
A blinding glory burst upon our eyes,
Which dazzled and bewilder'd for a time ;
And then the air felt all so balmy sweet,
So aromatic with the breath of Spring,
Delicious rapture flooded all my soul.
I felt to live was very joy of life ;
And like to that lone monk, who one day strayed
Under cathedral dome, who thought that he
Had grown so great, his presence filled the place.
And then my angel guide, he furled his sails,
His swift, far-reaching pinions scarcely moved,
But floating with delicious rapture soft
(Like those wild soaring birds you may have
watched

Careering freely in the open sky),
Sailed on, with sweeping, noiseless, lambent wing,
Through peaceful spaces of ethereal calm,
Which stretched right out, and out, and up, and on,
Into interminable vistas wide.

When, suddenly, a mountain great and high,
Loomed up in view, and raised its lofty head
Quite out of sight, and here we stopped and stayed;
And all the Earth lay stretching out beneath
Before our eyes, in panorama vast ;
And then a brilliant flame shot up behind
The mountain, where we stood, amazed, entranced,
And flashing upward to the zenith high,
Flooded with light the place we occupied.
I raised my hand to shield my dazzled eyes,
And looking whence the light proceeded forth,
I saw majestic angel, draped in white,
With one foot on the sea and one on land,
Lift up his hand, and heard him swear (in voice
Like deaf'ning torrents roar), " that time had
ceased."
And then he blew a trumpet blast, so strong,
Which sounding out, exceeding loud and long,
Awoke the echoes of the world, and shook
The mount whereon we stood, that trembled to
Its base, and caused the solid Earth to reel
Like drunken man ; and all at once the graves
Stood open, and the dead came forth, not all,
But most—for this was Resurrection Morn,
The first (" the resurrection of the just ")
The rest not rising now, but afterwards
At end of thousand years, millennial age).
" Blessed and holy they who have their part
In this, the first bright resurrection time,
For over them the second death shall have
No pow'r." I opened wide my wond'ring eyes
To take in all the scene, so weird and strange.

Beneath, before, and round, and round about,
On ev'ry hand appeared amazing sight ;
A multitudinous host, like waves on waves
Of an expanding sea ; and stretching out,
Beyond the bounds of sight, into unseen
Infinity, thousands on thousands strong,
Ten thousand times ten thousand, thousands more,
And thousand thousands still ; beyond all speech,
Beyond all thought, beyond all reckoning,
Myriads of mortals, now immortal men.

The vantage ground was great on which I stood,
And it had mighty range (like that from which
The Devil pointed out to tempted Christ,
All kingdoms of the world, and glory too),
And so the multitudinous host of men
Seemed individually dwarfed and small.

But this I saw, as cerements fell off,
And dropped into the graves, from off them all,
A stream of brilliant light at once up-rose,
And spread o'er all the land, when Death released
His grasp. The raiment all so glist'ning white,
Formed sea of glory, flooding all the land.
The greater part of that vast multitude
Was young, had passed away in infancy,
Like tender buds nipped by untimely frost.

Then suddenly an impulse strong took hold
Of me, to find the little girl I saw
Down here, trace her among that sea of heads.
I'd nearly given up, quite hopelessly,
When suddenly a face turned round and looked

(As if she, too, would find another face),
And then I recognised the happy smile
That erstwhile played around her dimpled cheek.
But she had grown so tall and womanly ;
She kept quite close to mother, as of yore,
The mother's hand was clasped in manly hold ;
All seemed united family once more.
And then I heard a rushing sound of wheels,
Celestial chariots, from the upper spheres,
Filled all the ambient air ; they glowed like fire,
And winged white horses pawed impatiently,
To bear aloft the ransomed and redeemed.

Cohorts of angels bright, were moving round,
As far as eye could reach, and marshalling
All that conglom'rate mass of Heaven-bound souls,
Minist'ring spirits to salvation's heirs).
Majestic was their mien, and the bright light
Which emanated, glorified the scene ;
Flashing electrically round about,
In rainbow'd hues, and thus eclipsing all
The pure and shining vestments of the saved.

So great as was that overwhelming mass
Of resurrected men, from out all climes,
All kindreds and estates, not slightest sign
Was visible of dire confusion wild,
So palpably observable full oft ;
All, all was order of divinest kind.
" Order is Heaven's first law," this reigned
supreme.
So as I stood, quite dazed, bewildered, and
Amazed at all I saw, which my dull eye,

Poor brain, and baffled sense could not take in,
I saw a chariot wheel all suddenly,
And bright and glorious angel, fair and sweet,
With heav'ly gracefulness deposited,
Once little girl, her mother, and her sire,
And quick as lightning flash they soared aloft.
Although their flight was all so wondrous fast,
I found myself, as soon as they, right up,
On top of the celestial mount, on high,
In presence of the City of our God.

Events, they moved so suddenly, and fast,
I'd hardly time to catch my fleeting breath,
Much less take in the deep broad sweep of things ;
But I had read the City lay four square,
And had twelve gates, with three on every side,
And that each sev'ral gate was of one pearl.

Before the central Eastern Gate they stopped,
And I snatched time to see that wondrous gate.
'Twas not like anything I'd ever seen.
It looked so creamy soft and beautiful,
Imparting a sweet sense of loveliness,
Reflecting mildly iridescent rays
As from the light of more than twenty moons.
A joy, a dream of beauty in itself.

Enamoured so, of that sweet pearly gate,
I failed t'observe what time the occupants
Alighted, till they stood on golden floor
(For it was gold outside as well as in),
And then I saw the gate swing open wide,
As if it oped itself, and from inside

An angel, fair and bright, made Heavenly
Obeisance, and in words of welcoming,
So sweetly modulate, cried out, " Come in,
Ye blessed of the Lord, come in, come in !"

Now, through this open gate, I caught a glimpse,
But only that, and for a moment's time,
Of the effulgent glory of that home,
Up there in Betterland, for them that love
The Lord, and for His glorious coming wait.
Mine eye, it swept along the golden floor,
Took in the mighty groups of angels fair
That swarmed the Heavenly Courts, the Cherubim,
The martyred saints and " spirits of the just
Made perfect," and the Seraphim, like tier
On tier ; and ending in the dim azure
Infinitive, of space beyond all thought.

And then I dreamt I saw the wing of Love,
As Watts had painted it, with its red spot ;
But, looking closely, found what John had seen
In vision weird, " A lamb, as had been slain."
And then a glorious burst of song rolled up,
And swelled in vibrate chords, so long and loud
(As if the choirs of Earth, o'er all the world,
Had met together, for a last rehearse,
The Hallelujah Chorus of the skies).
" And now to Him that loved us, and hath washed
Us from our sins, in His most precious blood,
And made us kings and priests unto our God,
Be glory now, henceforth, and evermore."

And then I heard a song, so full and clear,
Of harpers, standing round " the Sea of Glass,"
And harping, O so sweetly, with their harps ;
" Lift up your heads on high, ye pearly gates,
Be lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And let the King of Glory now come in."
And then great Michael, prince of angels, strong,
Stood up, and tow'ring high above the rest,
In deep sonorous voice, so rich and clear,
Rang out, " Who is the King of Glory ?" and
The echo soft, repeated it once more,
" Who is the King of Glory ?" and it ceased.

And then the whole united choirs of Heaven,
And harpers too, all joining in the psalm,
Burst forth in one tremendous loud refrain,
" The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."
And finally, the whole again took up
The lofty theme, on voice and harp, once more
(Sweetly vibrating round the throne of God).
" Lift up your heads on high, ye pearly gates,
Be lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
And let the children of the King of Kings,
Redeemed and ransomed of the Lord, come in."
And then, " the door was shut," I heard no more,
I woke. 'Twas but a dream, O such a dream !
And then I wished that I myself was there.

Erina, Prospect, Adelaide.

May, 1905.





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